

Region 3 GPRA Baseline RCRA Corrective Action Facility

Solutia Incorporated/Flexsys America (Formerly: Monsanto)

1 Monsanto Road
Nitro, WV 25143
Congressional District 2
EPA ID#: WVD039990965
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Current Progress at the Site

As described in more detail below, the past year has been busy at the Flexsys/Solutia facility in Nitro, West Virginia. Numerous activities have been completed or are planned for 2003 to address new issues and to better define past areas of concern.

In March 2002, an inspector from West Virginia's Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) Hazardous Waste group discovered a waste material on the riverbank of the Kanawha River while doing riverbank inspections. A shallow slide near the toe of the riverbank exposed a thin lens of discolored material that was intermingled with a black tar-like residue. The new release was located outside the fenced limits of the production facility, which required an expedited containment and remediation plan. Solutia addressed the new release under the existing RCRA Corrective Action permit, with oversight of both EPA and WVDEP, by installing a containment structure in the Kanawha River to prevent migration of contaminants during removal, completing test pits to determine the extent of the material on the bank, and excavating the contaminated material from the area (see pictures below).



In August 2002, Solutia notified EPA and WVDEP of a second discovery of black tar-like material similar in nature to the material found on the riverbank. The second area is located offsite on an adjacent parcel formerly known as the Heck's Warehouse property, which is now owned by the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration. However, both releases are located in the same general area near the "Past Disposal Area" (or PDA) on the Solutia property. The PDA was previously identified as a potential area of concern for past suspected uncontrolled disposal practices. Solutia has submitted proposals to EPA and WVDEP to investigate the PDA, the off-site Heck's property release and the riverbank to completely identify and delineate waste material that may be present in these areas.

Representatives from EPA, WVDEP and Solutia met in August to discuss the current status of the corrective action activities, the newly discovered off-site releases and the planned future investigations at the Nitro facility. During the meeting, Solutia committed to performing work to meet the Environmental Indicators, namely controlling current human exposures and the migration of contaminated groundwater, at the facility by 2005. Since the meeting, in addition to the proposed work plans described above, Solutia has performed a supplemental sediment and surface water field sampling event and submitted a proposal to perform a site-wide soil sampling investigation. Future work will also include a site-wide Geoprobe groundwater sampling event.

Solutia continues to operate groundwater recovery systems for kerosene and volatile organic compounds, as well as an oxygen injection system for benzene and phenol compounds. These systems will be reevaluated as part of the site-wide groundwater assessment activities. The current operator, Flexsys, has been replacing the current underground sewer lines with aboveground overhead piping to transfer process wastewater to the on-site treatment facility. The completion date for the sewer work has been delayed from December 2003 to December 2004 to provide sufficient time for Flexsys management to evaluate various business alternatives for the Nitro site.

Site Description

The Solutia Inc. Nitro Plant is located on the east bank of the Kanawha River, approximately one-half mile north of the City of Nitro in Putnam County, West Virginia in a heavily industrialized region. The site encompasses approximately 116 acres. Production areas, warehouse buildings, parking, or open storage currently covers about 60 percent of the site. The remaining 40 percent is generally unused gravel-covered or vegetated open space. The facility is bordered to the east and northeast by commercial properties on State Route 25, to the south by industrial property, to the west and northwest by the Kanawha River, and Interstate Highway 64 divides the facility.

From 1918 to 1921, the site manufactured explosives including "nitro-powder" to support World War I. When the explosives facility closed, the site was purchased and used for a variety of industries. In 1929, Monsanto acquired a portion of the facility that was owned by the Rubber Services Company, which manufactured chloride, phosphate, and phenol compounds. Operation and management of the site were transferred to FLEXSYS America, LP, a limited partnership, in 1995 and, by 1997, Monsanto spun off its interest in the Nitro facility to Solutia, Inc. Both Solutia and FLEXSYS hold the responsibility for the RCRA Corrective Action permit. Operations at the plant now includes production of an animal nutrition chemical in addition to rubber chemicals.

Site Responsibility

RCRA Corrective Action activities at this facility are being conducted under the direction of EPA Region 3 with assistance from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection.

Contaminants

The main contaminants in the groundwater include volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs). However, groundwater in the vicinity of the plant is not currently used as a drinking water source.

Community Interaction

The Solutia site borders the Kanawha River in an industrial development with several other facilities. The nearest community is located within one mile of the facility. Since 1990, Solutia and EPA Region 3 held a public meeting to inform the community about progress of the cleanup.

Government Contacts

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For more information about EPA's corrective action webpage, including Environmental Indicators, please visit our site at: www.epa.gov/reg3wcmd/correctiveaction.htm